

“Christian marriage, as a reflection of the union between Christ and his Church, is fully realized in the union between a man and a woman who give themselves to each other in a free, faithful and exclusive love, who belong to each other until death and are open to the transmission of life, and are consecrated by the sacrament, which grants them the grace to become a domestic church and a leaven of new life for society.”

– Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 292

Sunday, December 31, 2017 is the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, celebrated around the world by the universal Church. Some parishes in our diocese will have on display in their church an icon of the Holy Family, and during the Sunday Liturgy on December 31, 2017, families in their parish will be invited to consecrate their family to the Holy Family.

Consecration to the Holy Family

Composed by Archbishop William Lori

O Lord Jesus,
You lived in the home of Mary and Joseph in Nazareth.
There you grew in age, wisdom and grace
As you prepared to fulfill your mission
as our redeemer.

We entrust our family to you.

O Blessed Mary,
you are the mother of our savior.
At Nazareth you cared for Jesus
and nurtured him in the peace and joy of your home.
We entrust our family to you.

O Saint Joseph,
you provided a secure and loving home for Jesus and Mary,
and gave us a model of fatherhood
while showing us the dignity of work.
We entrust our family to you.

Holy Family,
we consecrate ourselves and our family to you.
May we be completely united
in a love that is lasting, faithful
and open to the gift of new life.
Help us to grow in virtue,
to forgive one another from our hearts,
and to live in peace all our days.
Keep us strong in faith, persevering in prayer,
Diligent in our work, and generous toward those in need.
May our home, O Holy Family,
truly become a domestic church
where we reflect your example in our daily life. Amen.
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, pray for us!

Building up your family as a holy family, a Catholic family; making your family a domestic church, cannot end with its consecration to the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph on December 31, 2017. Making your family holy and Catholic takes work, just as becoming a good football player or a good soccer takes hard work and much practice, turning your family into a holy family, a Catholic family, takes work and practice.

But you are not alone in this effort, the Church is with you, and through your parish Knights of Columbus council there are available a series of booklets “Building the Domestic Church.” The first booklet in that series, “The Family Fully Alive” is a great place to start.

If you are not sure where to start in your family; if that booklet seems like too big of a leap for you; might I suggest prayer together as a place to begin? Start simply, grace before meals, both at home and when eating out, an Our Father or a Hail Mary before bed. Ask your children what **THEY** would like you to pray for in their lives. Tell your children what **YOU** would like them to pray for in your life. It sounds trite but it is true, “The family that prays together; stays together.”